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dominion is proverbially associated with the encouragement of artificial local divisions. We have already noted the cleavage of class which it was the Party's task to bring about between the local peoples and their natural leaders, and the queer boundaries which at best can only have been laid down with tongue in cheek. But a policy first of division, and later of absorption, can be promoted as well by a system of education as by the drawing of frontiers. And, as Macaulay knew, the language in which education is to be conducted is a most vital factor for consideration in a dependent territory. In their turn applied linguistics begin with alphabets.

Different methods of transcribing Turkic languages may appear at first sight to be a subject of academic interest only, but between 1920 and 1940 the controversy in various aspects was a major issue in Turkey herself and among the Turkish peoples both in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The case is known as the alphabet controversy, and relates to the adoption first of a Roman script in place of the Arabic traditional to all Muslims, and later (in the areas of Russian dominion) of a Cyrillic in place of the Roman script. The first steps to the adoption of the Roman script were taken in 1921–2 in the Turkic-speaking parts of the Caucasus (Azerbaijan and parts of the North Caucasus). On 1st May 1925 this change was consolidated by decree of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet and Party, ratifying a Roman alphabet as the official script. On that day all papers appeared in the new garb, to the dismay of Arabic literates who could not follow a word of it. During the following three years rather different Roman scripts, varying *inter se*, were introduced into Central Asia also.

One effect was to insulate the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus from the cultural influences of Turkey herself, who was then still using the Arabic script. Soviet preference at that time for a Roman rather than a Cyrillic script is partly attributable to the fact that in Azerbaijan there was already a native movement in favour of Roman, and partly no doubt to a sound calculation that immediate insistence on the Cyrillic would give too much away. Any script other than Arabic

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would isolate the Turkic-speaking peoples in the USSR from the natural cultural influences brought to bear from outside, and that for the moment was sufficient.

Meanwhile a number of prominent Azeri exiles in Turkey, of whom Ahmet Aghaiev and Yusuf Akchura were the best known, were actively pursuing with the Kemalist government a project for the introduction of a Roman script into Turkey also. In 1928, as is well known, this movement was successful. It was then necessary for the Soviets to think again, for Turkey's action had re-established a basis for the cultural unity of all Turkic-speaking peoples. But time was needed to prepare the ground, and ten years went by before the plunge was taken, and Cyrillic alphabets, again varying somewhat, were introduced one by one into all the Soviet republics inhabited by peoples of Turkish and Iranian stock.[1]

This second change was uneconomic, for millions of textbooks had been issued for the schools in Roman, all the new teachers knew the Roman alphabet, and before they could teach they had to learn again. It was as if everybody in Britain had been ordered overnight to read and write in Greek letters. There has been much speculation as to the causes for the change, but, given the Soviet mentality, one answer is clear enough. Ankara had compelled the ship to go about on a new tack, a tack which incidentally should lead more directly to the home harbour. If linguistic unity were the aim, it had better be not a unity of the Turkic languages themselves but a shaping at least of their alphabets into a Russian mould.[2] Apart from that was the reasonable point that the adoption of the Cyrillic script for the local tongues would make it easier to

[1] Georgia and Armenia were exempted from this *ukase*; it is not difficult to see why.

[2] *E.g.* the Soviet press, speaking of a linguistics conference assembled at Baku in Jan. 1951, wrote: 'The duty of linguists is to write really scientific works on the origin and history of the [Azeri] language, in doing which they must fully show the favourable influence of the Russian language on it, and establish the identical elements in the two languages. The [Azeri] language must be enriched with words employed in the Russian language which are the possession of all the peoples of the USSR.'

It is hardly necessary to add that Azeri, a form of Western Turkish, has no identical elements with Russian.

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teach Russian as a second language. But there was surely a motive of a more subtle kind — the realization that change upon change in the medium of education would tend to sever the generations one from another and help to usher in the new age. It is indeed through the new education that the Soviets strive unceasingly to draw a line between the historical past and the world into which, as they see it, man is inevitably moving. This is a fundamental of their thought.

There remains one theme, connected with languages. Of late much has been made of Stalin's 1950 pronouncements on what has come to be known as the 'Marr controversy'. This hinges on the interpretation of a philological doctrine, taught by Professor N. Ya. Marr (d. 1934), that language is a superstructural phenomenon which changes as the basis of society changes. In his day Marr was reputed a great and scholarly philologist and not only in the Soviet Union, but the inclination now is to condemn him for having later prostituted his science to meet the demands of Marxist theory. The best illustration of the later jargon of the Marr school is perhaps the saying that personal pronouns were invented when private property was first instituted. It needs a philologist to unravel the technical complexities of this controversy; but as Stalin (who opened the ball by exclaiming 'I am no philologist') attempted it, it may not be impertinent to join in. References to such abstractions as globogenic process, Japhetic theory or morphological structure at the best probably meant no more to Stalin than to the general reader; at the worst as ground for a political argument they read like charlatanism. What is interesting is that on so strange a peg Stalin himself should have chosen to hang a long series of articles in *Pravda* and *Bolshevik*, reaching the conclusion that every dogma in Marxism, and no doubt in Marrism too, is to be understood relatively to the conditions in which it is sought to apply it. That this is sophistry as a contribution to scholarship is clear from the accompaniment of a mocking challenge to the scholars and the inclusion of more than one platitude. For not only was Stalin 'no philologist', he proceeded to instruct us

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The population of the former[1] was traditionally nomadic, Turkish, and in religious matters fairly indifferent. Turkestan, on the other hand, being predominantly urban and agricultural, and inhabited by Iranians and considerably Arabicized and Iranicized Turks, was until the Soviet period one of the great centers of Islamic learning and practice. This difference between the religious background of the two regions must be kept in mind when studying contemporary Central Asian Muslims.

The most striking feature of the religious attitude of the Muslim refugees is their strong and articulate hostility toward all forms of established religion, including Islam. Time and again, the informants expressed the conviction that all religion is a form of superstition incapable of standing the test of "science," of serving society as a means of attaining social progress. The typical opinion ran as follows: "Yes, I believe in a Supreme Being, but it doesn't matter whether He is called Allah, God, Christ, or anything else. Nor does He care whether I pray or not. Religion is a superstition which keeps people backward. Look at the Arabs and Persians, where religion has gotten them: they are poor and ignorant. To achieve progress, we must not allow religion to interfere, though religion should not be persecuted because it does help some people in facing life." The general assumptions behind such reasoning are fairly obvious: the belief in a conflict between faith and reason, religion and science; a pragmatic, utilitarian scale of values; scepticism of certain aspects of religion, leading to a wholesale rejection of all religion.

In the long run, this attitude may well determine the whole future of Islam in Central Asia. The intelligentsia displays the same cult of reason, and of its concomitant, secular society, in an extreme, uncomprising way, as do the educated groups of other Asian societies. Here, as there, progress, the ultimate good, is conceived as incompatible with religion. Against such hostility to established religion the revival of Islam in its pre-1917 form, even under conditions of complete freedom, does not seem likely.

This conclusion is strengthened by the picture given of the religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. Islam in the Soviet Union has to operate under extremely difficult conditions, due in part to the specific repressive measures undertaken by the regime against religion, and in part to the general conditions of Soviet life. In the first category are the physical destruction of the Islamic leadership undertaken between 1927 and 1932 through the arrest and deportation of virtually all persons enjoying some religious status in the Muslim community, from the top hierarchy to the lowest village mullah; the closing of nearly all the village mosques and most of the city mosques; the threat of dismissal hanging constantly over every Soviet citizen in any position of responsibility if known to engage in religious practices; and the nearly complete suppression of all religious literature through the change of the native alphabets (from Arabic to

[1] [the northern half of Soviet Central Asia or Kazakhstan -- Analyst]

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Latin in the late 1920's, and again from Latin to Cyrillic ten years later), the impounding of religious texts, including the Qur'an, and the total cessation of all publication of a religious nature. These antireligious policies would of themselves make an active religious life most difficult.

The interviews, however, indicate that equally important in hampering the religious life of Central Asian Islam are forces not directly connected with the Communist antireligious policies, such as the general impoverishment of the population, which compels the inhabitants to devote all their time and energies to attain bare survival, and leaves little freedom for time-consuming actions required by religion; the shortage of animals used in certain Muslim festivals; and the requirements of a highly dynamic society, geared primarily for production and not for the satisfaction of the needs of its citizens. If, despite such formidable difficulties, Islamic practices have not altogether vanished from Central Asia, the reason must be sought both in the great hold which this religion exercises on its followers (Bartold had once observed that history knows many cases of mass conversion *to* Islam, but not a single instance of a society being converted *from* Islam), and the secondary role of leaders and institutions in that religion; the latter factor permits Muslims, like the Jews, to survive better under extreme oppression than other religions for which the clergy, the hierarchy, the supreme spiritual authority are essential.

One of the most important — perhaps the single most important — element in the Muslim ritual are the five daily prayers. This practice seems to have declined among Soviet Muslims to such an extent as to have all but vanished. The principal cause for its disappearance is the inability of Soviet Muslims to take time off from work in order to recite the prayers; such stoppage of work is considered "economic sabotage" and involves serious retribution. The fact that since the 1930's Friday — the day of rest and public prayer — is considered a regular working day in Central Asia prevents the adult population from engaging in communal worship as well. The only times of the day when a Muslim may perform his prayers undisturbed occur at sunrise and at sunset — the first and the last of the daily prayers; that is, when he is at home, with his family. This is the reason why, to the extent that the daily prayer is observed at all, it survives largely among that part of the population which is not gainfully employed: above all, the women and the elders.

The younger generation is further handicapped by its ignorance of the prayers. Only a few of the refugees interviewed knew how to perform the regular daily prayers; none of those belonged to the younger generation. It may also be added that not one of these refugees had cared to learn the prayers since his arrival in the West.

Another important duty of Muslims is to observe daytime fasting during the entire 28 days of the month of Ramazan. Prior to 1917 the fast was